

7 - Richie Tozier Comes Home by DeTrashmouth

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Summary: The final part of this Tragic Tale, when Richie 'Trashmouth' Tozier returns to his hometown of Derry.

7 - Richie Tozier Comes Home

(With co-writer Darkness Falls)

Twenty-Seven years... Shit, where does the time go?

Having moved out of Derry in '91 and after twenty-five impossible years, Richie 'Trashmouth' Tozier had finally come home. But had he, truly? It didn't feel like it yet. Don Henley's *'The Boys of Summer'* blared from WZON (a station that declared itself 'Bangor's AM stereo for classic 80's rock!') on the radio and just up ahead he saw a sign which has caused the flesh of his back to break out in hard ridges of goose-flesh;

Penobscot County - Derry, Maine.

He narrowly swerved past a turtle that was taking its' sweet-ass time crossing the road, and suddenly he was in Derry again, and the memories he had all but forgotten came flooding back like a broken dam. Like the Dam in the Barrens.

"The Dam..." Richie heard himself think aloud, over the music playing. "That goddamn dam... 'Fess up, Eds — who built the dam?" Richie asked no one now, but that summer day in '89 he had asked the question to Eddie Kaspbrak, who had been down in the Barrens with Bill, 'Big Bill' Denbrough and Ben 'Haystack' Hanscom. Stan 'the Man' Uris was there, too. They had gone down there together after their run-in with the ever so crazy Henry Bowers and that Hanscom kid.

"This must have been your idea," Richie had said to Hanscom, as he knelt down and swept a hand at the spreading pool of water. "These wet ends couldn't light a firecracker with a flamethrower."

Richie began laughing, God, he was such a little shithead back then. His eyes wandered up to his rear-view where he glimpsed at himself and Richie came to the screeching halt of the realization that, not much had really changed in nearly thirty years. Once a trashmouth, always a trashmouth.

Richie idly reached over with his right hand and fished a Winston out of the packet that laid in his empty passengers seat. What was he doing? He had quit four years ago, but he could use one right now, all right. Just one. With shaky hands, he lit it up with his zippo, a gesture that already felt as familiar to him as pushing his old glasses back up the bridge of his nose after wearing contacts for half of his life now, he thought, "*Winston tastes good, like a cigarette should.*" *Ain't that right, Eds?*"

Richie shook his head. He really didn't know how his old friends, those fellow Losers' Club members ever tolerated him as much as he did. He passed the old cinema and arcade, long since closed down and now with nothing more than a faded 'Thanks for the memories, Derry' sign remaining of once what was, and missing a few letters here and there. That was enough reminiscing for awhile, Richie thought as he slammed the knob of his radio and spun it away from WZON, cranking it now to WKIT-FM as Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds came on. The song would carry him through the rest of the town as he made his way through the night and to the restaurant good ol' Homschool Hanlon had told him to meet at, a Chinese joint called Jade of the Orient. a town that to him, had the stench of death heavy in the air. Oh, it was great to be back in Derry, breathing in that old .. Derriere.

*Hey, little train, we are all jumping on...
The train that goes to the Kingdom
We're happy, Ma, we're having fun
And the train ain't even left the station...*

*Hey, little train, wait for me...
I once was blind, but now I see
Have you left a seat for me?
Is that such a stretch of the imagination?*

*Hey little train, wait for me...
I was held in chains, but now I'm free
I'm hanging in there, don't you see?
In this process of elimination...*

"What the fuck are you doing, Tozier?" Richie heard himself ask.

The red Mustang he had rented out of Bangor International was no where as good as the one he had back home in L.A., but it would suffice for now. He'd hoped to be back in Derry before nightfall, make an appearance, say his 'hello's' to the people he was apparently friends with but had long since forgotten, and then get the hell outta dodge. That way he could say he still showed up and then could be out of there just as fast. But that didn't go exactly as planned. It was already dark before he even got out of Bangor, and had only just crossed the county line to Derry.

Fuck. Shit.

It was too quiet, so he switched the radio back to the oldies station and cranked it up just in time to catch the ending to Steppenwolf's "*Magic Carpet Ride*," which prompted a little chuckle out of him. What a ride this would be, indeed. Richie began fumbling around his leather jacket pockets for his cigarettes, but found something else instead.

Keeping his eye on the road, he retrieved the tiny packet of candy from his pocket. Not just any kind of 'candy,' either. The expensive kind. The Hollywood party favor. He'd just spent ten grand on a bundle of which he'd intended to overdose on the night before, and thought it'd all gone to waste. But now with shaky hands, he fiddled with the temptation held the little packet.

Dare he?

"...Alright," Richie said. "Just one bump. That's all I need. Just like going on stage, just enough to get me through the next hour. That's all." The road was pretty straight ahead, so he didn't feel the need to pull over. Biting the tip off the wrapper, he leaned forward and dabbed the smallest little bump on his dashboard. Leaning forward, he sniffed it up, gasping. Looking at the rest of the packet, he decided 'fuck it' and poured the rest of it out into a crooked line, leaning back down to give every last gram a sniff.

I looked -

Around -

A lousy candle's all I found

*Well, you don't know what -
We can find
Why don't you come with me little girl...
On a magic carpet ride
Well, you don't know what
We can see
Why don't you tell your dreams to me
Fantasy will set you free*

*Close your eyes girl...
Look inside girl...
Let the sound take you away...*

Richie leaned back upward, he'd gotten his zest, all right.
"Zzzzzzziiiiing!" He said with a laugh- before -

"Oh SHIT!"

He grabbed the wheel just in time as he swerved to the left, mere seconds before he'd managed to drive right off the road and end up dead in the canal. That was all he needed. Luckily he'd gotten himself straightened out, as he sniffed deeper and gave his nose a rub. Stuff always gave him the tickles.

Ted Nugent's "*Stranglehold*" was now blaring from his radio as he continued down the road, coming to a big, red light at an intersection. There was no other traffic in the town at that moment, but he stopped nonetheless. He seized the opportunity flip a switch and let the top of his convertible slowly slide down into place, the fresh air would feel cool on his face, which was now burning up. Derry air, he thought. Derriere, he chuckled.

And that's when he saw her. Looking around a moment ago, he could have sworn the town was dead and there was no one around for what appeared to be miles. But now, he was locking eyes with a woman who was standing just off to the road. She wasn't bad looking, either. It looked as if Derry had upped it's game in the last 27 years. He gave a quick look around, and then looked back to her with a smile. Maybe she knew who he was, that he was famous. De Trashmouth, man of a thousand voices. Had appeared on TV several times, and was even in the middle of a comedy tour. He had gigs coming up in

Reno, and was gonna make sure he lived to see them, despite this little detour in Derry. Hell, in this moment, he didn't even remember why the hell he'd come back all. Just that he'd promised to, but why? For what? That didn't matter anymore. He gave a huge grin at the girl on the side of the road, and shrugged.

"Hey, miss," Richie called out, beckoning her over. What was the worse that could happen? Maybe his time in Derry wouldn't be so bad, after all.

Tall, slender sexual, the female had purses lips and curves that most men wouldn't travel without some serious balls. A smile pulled at blood red velvet soft lips. She looked the type to lean a window and give a man a hefty quote for a night visit.

She said nothing when he called her. Her body spoke volumes. Hips sway and breasts. Supple, perky, and shaped heaved up when she leaned toward him. A voice finally came from her like smooth silk.

"Hey there handsome, give a gal a ride? I'm alittle far from home. I would totally owe you, stud." She gave the comedian a wink before leaning herself over the window, giving him a damn good look. Her head tilting to make her raven locks spill over her left shoulder. She was a score by any mans standards, the type of woman that was into the kinda shit good girls just didn't do.

Richie had a weird thing about anxiety. Even though he'd just snorted most of his negative feelings away, now he was suddenly feeling it all coming back. Was this really happening right now? He gave a quick look around to make sure this wasn't some kind of scheme, living in L.A. had taught him to be cautious. Paranoid for his own protection, even. But, this was Maine. Fucking Derry. No one around here was smart enough to pull off a ploy like that.

"Well..." Richie began. "There is somewhere I have to be... But, fuck it. They've waited 27 years, another hour won't kill 'em." If only Richie had known then the irony of such a statement. "Whatcha waitin' for? Hop the fuck in- Pardon my French, if you're a religious woman," Richie smirked.

It almost seemed too good to be true. He momentarily thought of

some old story he'd heard about. 'La... Llorona' or some shit. or 'The woman in white,' Ghost story, hitchhiker type of thing. Or a succubus situation. Whichever, stuff like that only happened in the movies. Not real life. Never. The red light above him took its sweet ass time changing to green, but he looked over and shrugged. "No time like the present," Richie said, and in his utter narcissism and vainness, honestly wondered if anyone from Derry would recognize him as the famous comedian who was gracing the little nothing-town with his presence.

The female smiled in such a seductive way it fit her next words. "Do I look religious to you stud?"

She pulled the door gently and slid in the seat beside him. Richie tozier falling for a pretty face when a entity wore a sexual mask. A pretty face looked at him but what sat in that seat was nothing of the sort.

She slipped a hand to his thigh, a soft touch but held the meaning behind its intention. "I do worship but it's usually in the bedroom. Saying the name loudly..in a tone you look like your familiar with. Richie tozier right?"

Well this would certainly be an interesting way to kill an hour, so to speak. Before it had just been Richie and the road, and some classic tunes and a little bit of the ol' 'Bolivian Marching Powder' to help with nerves and whatnot.

Now he was in the company of was pretty damn fine lady. They didn't even make them this good in Hollywood. It was honestly like a lot of plastic, Botox tailored Frankenstein monsters out there, they were all so fake. He hadn't even felt a real pair of tits since the early 2000's. Since his divorce from Sandy. But no reason to think of her now, when he had a ripe luscious thing sitting next to him.

The Mustang sped off and Richie kept eyeing her through his glasses, smirking when she acknowledged his name.

"Oh, so you've heard of me?" He grinned. Good to know that people in such a small town probably spoke of him. *'Remember that gangly little four-eyed trashmouth fuck? Yeah he's famous now, ayuh.'* he figured they said. *Yeah, who's the loser now?*

She glanced in his direction but her eyes had a faded color to them. They were getting blurry as if it was a corpse sitting beside him. "You know I'm a comedian of sorts. I make children laugh."

An eerie chill ran up his spine. Suddenly, he was regretting picking this girl up. He knew it was too good to be true. The moment she mentioned children...

The song on the radio seemed to change all on it's own then, no longer was the classic rock Richie had been raised on playing in the night, but a different song played now. It sounded like children singing, though as the music kept playing, the cheerful voices began to sound more guttural, almost like croaking gurgles, growling...

*Oranges and lemons...
Say the bells of St Clement's...
You owe me five farthings ...
Say the bells of St Martin's ...*

Richie's eyes crept back over to her, but she was changing. So much for shit like this only happening in horror flicks, he officially felt like he was in a scary movie come to fucking life. As he turned towards her again, he saw that her face was now bone-white, with two very familiar red lines drawn down her face. Her voice was changing as she... No, not she, it. IT. As IT gradually took over. It was the clown. That fucking clown.

The voice was changing, twisting. Her face now painted white...red lines pulling at her face. "I make children laugh. I also make them...die."

With that the form changed, pulled tore into something richie had long since forgotten. "Won't kill them? Oh yes, yes Richie Richie it will! Hooohoho! I will kill all of you! I will feed on you and all of you. Go back little Richie. Go home. Or you will die here!"

"Oh fu-" he couldn't even speak. Richie was petrified beyond belief. He pulled the car into the middle of the road with a deafening SCRRRREEEEEEEECH and within seconds he threw himself from the car and onto the road. Thank god he'd put the top down, he didn't even open the door, he just flung himself up and over it and hit the ground with a forceful impact. Rolling away from the car, he

struggled to keep his glasses on, holding both arms of them tightly as he slammed his eyes shut.

"IT ISN'T REAL IT ISN'T REAL," he began chanting in a panic. "IT ISN'T REAL IT ISN'T REAL! GO AWAY!" he kept his eyes locked shut and begged, prayed, that thing in his car would be gone when he found the courage to open his eyes again.

Gone it was. Nothing left of that girl from moments before. Only a red balloon sat tied to the wheel of his on its plastic surface as it rotated in his direction was the simple words.

'Come home.' The challenge each loser would be welcomed to Derry with. 'Come home losers. Come play.'

Richie at last opened his eyes as he heard the horrific cackling of IT's laughter die down. He told himself not to believe it was there anymore, to take away that bit of fear he'd been serving up to it on a silver goddamn platter, and it worked. His memory of 1989 was still hazy at best, but it was all starting to become clear to him now. In this moment he remembered the day he had been attacked by IT in the form of the hideous Paul Bunyan statue in the center of the town.

When he finally braved the chance of opening his eyes, he looked up and saw she.. IT.. was indeed gone. Had he maybe just imagined the whole fucking thing? Maybe he'd gotten a bad cut of coke, is all. He'd already experienced horrible hallucinations the time a girl snuck a little DMT into the mix. That's all it was, probably. Maybe. Hopefully.

"Okay, Tozier ... get a grip, man..." Richie uttered to himself, slowly but surely reclaiming what was left of his sanity. Of course it had been a ploy by IT. He remembered that now.. IT could take the form of anything it wanted, forms it picked from their minds and greatest fears to lure them in... then scare the shit out of them before going in for the kill. "Lesson learned... No more hitch-hiking hookers."

But that's when he caught something out of the corner of his eye. Something red and shiny. Not the clown... Just a remnant of it, a reminder that it had been there. A red fucking balloon. Richie sat up and adjusted his glasses, realizing he was doing so with terribly shaking hands and moving so fast, he thought for sure he'd be sick.

He read the message on the balloon. It said; 'Come home,' but he read it as 'fuck you.'

Richie turned over, burning acids hitting the back of his throat, and proceeded to vomit all the fuck over the road. He hadn't eaten much since the phone call from Mike to come back to this dreadful place known as Derry, so it was mainly just dry heaving and stomach acids that splattered on the ground.

He jumped in place, startled, as the balloon drifted past him as if pulled on a string, and he looked up, seeing where it was floating towards. He was in City Center, and the balloon was headed right towards his old nemesis. Richie looked up at the old statue of Paul Bunyan, patron saint of Derry

'Old Paul,' he thought. 'What you been doing since I've been gone? Makee any new riverbeds, coming home tired and dragging your ax behind you? Made any new lakes on account of wanting a bathtub big enough so you could sit in water up to your neck? Scared any more little kids the way you scared me that day?'

Richie finally pushed himself off the ground, sliding his hands into his pockets and finally finding his pack of cigarettes. He took one out and lit it with still shaking hands.

"Hey there, Paul. Tall Paul," Richie said up to the statue, hoping to fuck it wouldn't respond. "I'm here to say you're the same in every way, ain't aged a motherfuckin' day..."

The balloon had drifted right up beside ol' Paul's ax, and suddenly BURST into a million little rubber pieces. The sound was glass-shattering, like the firing of a fucking canon, causing Richie to drop his cigarette and choke on the smoke.

"Ahh! AHHH!" He shrieked, wasting no time hopping back into the car, this time opening the door to do so, and slamming it shut. He pulled the switch to bring the top back down and frantically rolled up his window, taking off into the night without the company of a woman, or IT, or anything, except the music of the good ol' Doobie Brothers, that he hoped with slowly begin to soothe him.

*Don't you feel it growing, day by day...
People... getting ready for the news...
Some are happy, some are sa-aaaaa-ad
Woah, gotta let the music play...
Mhm*

*What the people need, is a way to make them smile
It ain't so hard to do if you know how...
Gotta get a message, get it on through...
Oh now mamma, don't you ask me why...*

*Woah, ohhhhhh listen to the music
Woah, ohhhhhh listen to the music
Woah, ohhhhhh listen to the music
All the tiiiiii-iiii-ime...*

By time he finally arrived to the Jade, his stomach felt as if it was going to implode. He definitely had no appetite in sight, and honestly wondered how this was going to go. Every instinct he had told him to just leave. Don't come back. He'd barely escaped this town alive all those years ago, who was to say he'd be this lucky this time? Richie turned the engine off though, and just sat there in silence, wondering if he was going to be sick again. That nervous feeling never went away. And in the quiet of the night, he suddenly heard voices. Not unpleasant voices, in fact, vaguely familiar ones. Familiar, yes, but different all the same. Looking out his window now, he saw a tall, slender figure and a woman of shorter frame, but with strikingly vibrant auburn hair.

'I'm sorry, who invited Molly Ringwald into the group?' Richie remembered once saying to her. Was that her? Had he been expecting his friends to not grow up the way he did? Smirking, Richie finally exited his car and slammed the door, breaking up this tender reunion happening before him.

"Wow. You two look amazing," he said, sounding less than enthused.
"What the fuck happened to me?"

Seeing them made it real, just like seeing the other losers would as well. So much had changed in almost three decades.. And yet? So much hadn't changed at all.

This was the moment when Richie Tozier felt like he had finally come home.